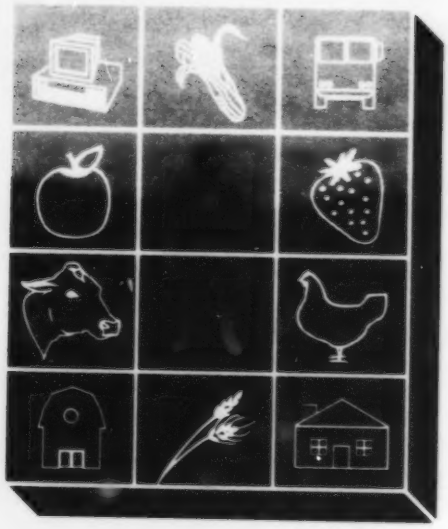
The AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE



Your Window on Labour Issues in Agriculture

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In today's changing world, farming is a challenge. As in other sectors of the economy, success in farming depends first and foremost on the skills, motivation, and productivity of the workforce. To survive and prosper, farmers need plenty of expertise and the right kind of help... at a price they can afford. Yet in recent years, for a variety of reasons, B.C. farmers have had increasing difficulty finding and keeping the help they need.

To deal with this problem, producers have entered into a new kind of partnership with the federal and provincial governments — a partnership that

- enables producers to take a leadership role in finding and implementing solutions
- gives producers a stronger voice in establishing government policy relating to agricultural workforce issues through the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board
- includes representation from each of the major commodity producer organizations and all of the various government departments and Ministries that can contribute to the solutions.

The Agricultural Workforce Policy Board (formerly referred to as the Joint Management Committee for Agricultural Employment Policy) was established early in 1991, by agreement of the governments of Canada and British Columbia. This document describes the work of the Board and the achievements with respect to the agricultural workforce over the past year. It also restates the Board's mission and objectives and sets out a detailed new program of action for the coming year.

Who's Involved—Representation on the

Producer Groups/Organizations

B.C. Federation of Agriculture	Harke Van der Meulen, President
B.C. Agriculture Research and Development Corp. (ARDCORP)	Bill Twaites, Program Coordinator *
Berry Producers	Murray Driediger
Cattle Producers	Dave Merz
Dairy Producers	John Van Dongen
Grain Producers	Darlene Collins
Grape Producers	Bert Sperling *
Hog Producers	Jake Janzen
Mushroom Producers	Ted De Vries
Nursery & Greenhouse Producers	John Schroeder
Poultry Producers	Margaret Speitelsbach
Tree Fruit Producers	Jamie Kidston
Vegetable Producers	Andy Bissett *

Public Sector Departments/Organizations — Federal

Agriculture Canada	John Berry, Regional Director Agri-Food Development Branch
	John Hill, Development Officer * Agri-Food Development Branch
Employment and Immigration Canada	Shirley Robertson, Director, Programs
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Agricultural Workforce Policy Board

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Garth Bean, Agricultural Employment Services Contractor

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Public Sector Ministries/Organizations — Provincial

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	Tom Pringle, Assistant Deputy Minister
	David Freed, Director * Rural Organizations Branch
	Terry Peterson, Director * Farm Management Branch
Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology	Joyce Ganong, Assistant Deputy Minister Skills Development
	Jim Howie, Manager * Labour Market Services Branch
	Bev Verboven, Labour Market * Adjustment Programs Coordinator
Ministry of Social Services	Glen Tadsen, Employment Initiative Program Manager

* Members of the Secretariat (see Figure 1, p. 9.)

Achievements to Date

In April of 1991, the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board released *The Agricultural Workforce: A Strategy for the Future*, an initial planning document that

- outlines its terms of reference
- briefly describes the human resources situation in the agricultural sector at that time
- articulates the Board's vision, mission, and objectives
- sets out seven specific priorities for action.

During the past year, progress was made in virtually every one of the action areas identified in *The Agricultural Workforce: A Strategy for the Future*. The following developments and achievements are particularly noteworthy:

- The executive capacity to address issues related to the agricultural workforce was strengthened with the hiring of a Manager exclusively concerned with acting on the priorities of the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board and supporting the work of the Management Committee and Secretariat (see Figure 1).
- The implementation of the "Human Resource Study of the B.C. Horticulture Industry" marked an important step in addressing the Board's human resource planning priority. This study, commissioned by Employment and Immigration Canada, was prepared by Ernst and Young over an eight-month period. It provides detailed information about human resource, training, and skills requirements in the province's horticulture industry and makes some detailed recommendations that may have broader applicability in addressing the workforce issues for the entire agricultural sector in B.C.
- The five-volume *Human Resource Handbook*, an instructional resource designed for use in workshops and training programs aimed at agricultural producers, was published during the summer of 1991. This resource was developed by the Farm Management Branch of the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food with funding provided under ARDSA (the Agri-Food Regional Development Subsidiary Agreement). The effectiveness of alternative training delivery approaches that involve the use of this resource is now being assessed

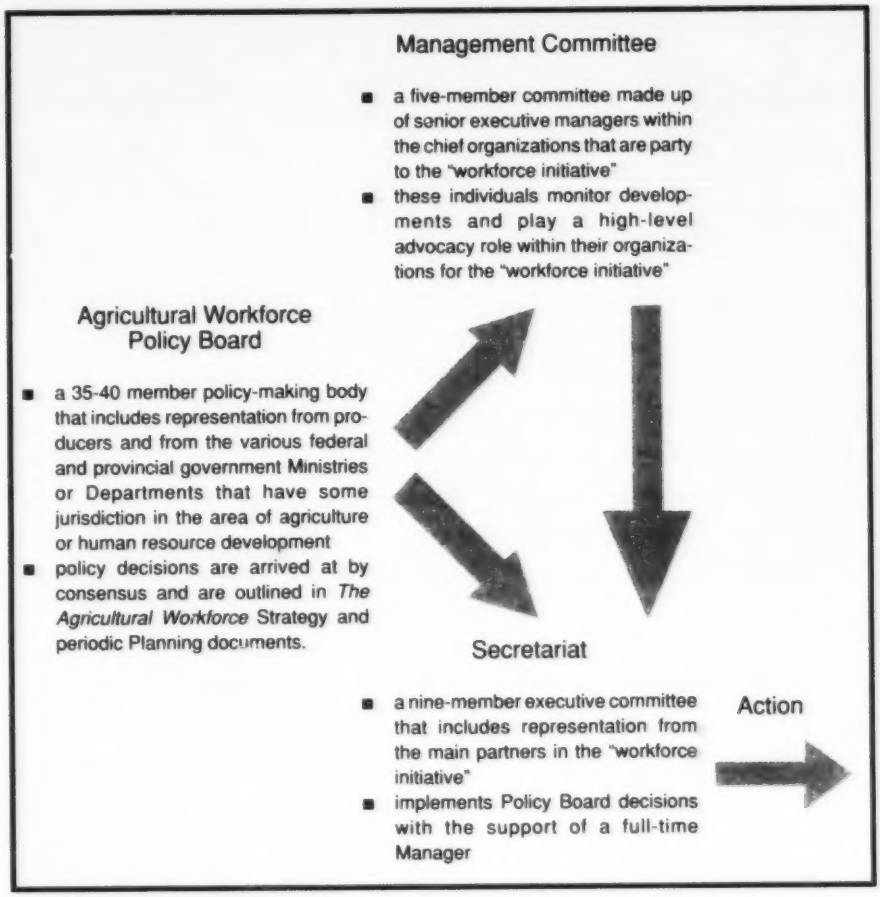
Management Committee
a five-member committee made up of senior executive managers within the chief organizations that are party to the "workforce initiative"
these individuals monitor developments and play a high-level advocacy role within their organizations for the "workforce initiative"
Agricultural Workforce Policy Board
a 35-40 member policy-making body that includes representation from producers and from the various federal and provincial government Ministries or Departments that have some jurisdiction in the area of agriculture or human resource development
policy decisions are arrived at by consensus and are outlined in The Agricultural Workforce Strategy and periodic Planning documents.
Secretariat
a nine-member executive committee that includes representation from the main partners in the "workforce initiative"
implements Policy Board decisions with the support of a full-time Manager
Action

Figure 1: The Agricultural Workforce—System for Action

by ARDCORP (the training and research subsidiary of the B.C. Federation of Agriculture) in cooperation with Agricultural Employment Services (with funding provided by Employment and Immigration Canada). Several test training sessions have occurred, and initial results seem promising.

- In the fall of 1991, action was taken to coordinate British Columbia's efforts in the area of farm management with those of other provinces, through participation in planning a National Farm Business Management Program.
- As part of the Farm Management Initiative (FMI), work has begun on a "Farm Management Needs Analysis Study" for British Columbia. Questionnaires and surveys have been prepared and focus groups have been held as part of this study, which is being conducted by UBC with funding provided by Agriculture Canada.

- Also as part of the Farm Management Initiative (FMI), ARDCORP and the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food carried out several other projects related to farm management generally, and human resource management training in particular. Funding for these was provided by Employment and Immigration Canada, Agriculture Canada, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.
- During the 1991 growing season, Agricultural Employment Services implemented the "Canada First" employment policy (a policy to give jobs in Canada to Canadian workers), carefully monitoring the results to determine how well it furthers labour mobility and meets the needs of the agricultural sector in B.C. The results of that monitoring will be incorporated into a formal assessment of the policy, which is to be conducted by Employment and Immigration Canada.
- A *Housing and Labour Supply and Demand Study for the British Columbia Tree Fruit Industry* was prepared by Pacific Resource Consultants for the B.C. Fruit Growers Association. This study provides basic housing information with respect to an agricultural industry, where housing for seasonal workers is a pressing issue.
- Work on an "Inventory of Required Skill Standards for Employees" has been undertaken by ARDCORP with funding provided by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. The "Inventory" focusses on the ten major agricultural commodity groups.

In addition to these measures, a number of less dramatic steps have been taken to follow up on the priorities and action plans identified in *The Agricultural Workforce: A Strategy for the Future*, chiefly though continuation and assessment of existing programs and mechanisms (e.g., the Manager, Agricultural Workforce Strategy, has begun an inventory of materials that "promote" agriculture and has undertaken an examination of "Agriculture in the Classroom" and other school-based programs as methods of enhancing the image of agricultural labour).

Mission Statement

Working in concert, the partners represented on the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board will address the labour supply and job training needs of British Columbia's agricultural sector.

Objectives — revised April 1992

In carrying out its mission, the Board's objectives are to

1. enhance the working partnership between the various private and public sector groups concerned with agricultural employment
2. create an awareness among agricultural producers of the extent to which their particular operation can benefit from improved Human Resource Management
3. make agricultural employers more aware of the farm management training resources available to them (e.g., accessible and relevant courses or materials)
4. develop improved programs, with better instructional resources, and provide more opportunities for agricultural employers and employees (both present and prospective) to acquire and improve job-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes
5. increase the level of producer participation in activities designed to improve their own skill and knowledge, and the knowledge and skill of employees within their industry
6. establish knowledge and skill standards for certain types of agricultural employment
7. identify and minimize imbalances in the demand for and supply of agricultural labour
8. facilitate, in a fair and orderly manner, the relocation or temporary movement of skilled and unskilled agricultural employees to industries (and regions) where there are shortages
9. improve and enhance the image of agriculture and of employment in that industry
10. take account of ethnic and cultural considerations that have a bearing on labour supply
11. examine possible incentive measures that would make agricultural employment more attractive and facilitate the implementation of those that are feasible.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Looking ahead to remaining challenges, the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board affirms the continued relevance of its original Mission and of its eight original objectives. In particular, the Board will continue to give high priority to the achievement of Objective 1 (enhancing the working partnership between the various private and public sector groups concerned with agricultural employment). The Board will continue to strengthen the partnership though consultation and dialogue, promote an "Inter-Ministerial" approach to resolving agricultural workforce issues, and press for allocation of resources to addressing the concerns it has identified.

While reaffirming the continued relevance of its other original objectives, the Board has identified three additional objectives (2, 3, and 11 in the revised list of Objectives) and has slightly reworded four of the original objectives (Objectives 4, 5, 8, and 9). Recognizing that certain objectives can be grouped together for planning purposes, the Board has also "reordered" its objectives and articulated its detailed Action Plans in relation to four main areas of concern, each of which is addressed by one or more of the objectives:

- **Farm Management** (addressed by Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5)
- **Training and Education** (addressed by Objectives 4, 5, 6))
- **Labour Supply and the Image of Agricultural Employment** (addressed by Objectives 7, 8, 9, 10)
- **Housing and Other Incentives** (addressed by Objective 11).

These four areas of concern are themselves interrelated, as is clear from the fact that actions in two of the areas target the same objectives. Certainly, many farm management difficulties within the sector can be met with improved training and education. It is also evident that labour supply shortages may be partly alleviated though the provision of better seasonal housing and other incentives for agricultural workers. The section on Action Priorities, however, treats these areas separately and outlines a number of distinct actions that can be taken with respect to each.

Farm Management

Three of the eleven objectives targeted by the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board (see p. 11) pertain to helping agricultural producers upgrade their farm management skills. With Objectives 2, 3, 4, and 5 the Board has committed itself to

2. create an awareness among agricultural producers of the extent to which their particular operation can benefit from improved Human Resource Management
3. make agricultural employers more aware of the farm management training resources available to them (e.g., accessible and relevant courses or materials)
4. develop improved programs, with better instructional resources, and provide more opportunities for agricultural employers and employees (both present and prospective) to acquire and improve job-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes
5. increase the level of producer participation in activities designed to improve their own skill and knowledge, and the knowledge and skill of employees within their industry.

Farm management normally comprises financial, marketing, and production management, as well as human resource management. As the focus of the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board is agricultural employment policy, its action priorities center on producer training in human resource management only. Many agricultural producers, whether they rely on the full-time or part-time help of paid workers or on the help of unpaid family members, can benefit from human resource planning and management training that enables them to

- decide what kind of assistance they need
- decide how much assistance they need
- decide when they will need that assistance
- find the assistance they need
- make the most effective use of the assistance they get
- deal with the typical challenges involved in having hired and/or family workers
- keep the workers they need.

The other aspects of farm management are also of crucial importance, but fall within the mandate of the federal/provincial National Farm Business Management Program, which begins in 1992-93. To ensure that the management needs of farmers are met, the National Farm Business Management Committee will work closely with the Agriculture Workforce Policy Board and the Secretariat.

Action Priorities

1

promoting to producers the benefits of improved human resource management

The Agricultural Workforce Policy Board is committed to promoting human resource management opportunities and benefits, as an immediate and ongoing priority. Producers need to become more aware of the benefits for the sector as a whole, for particular industries within the sector, and for individual agricultural employers. The Secretariat is accordingly instructed to

- work with ARDCORP, the B.C. Federation of Agriculture, Employment and Immigration Canada, Agricultural Employment Services, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, and producer commodity groups or commodity leaders to promote the benefits of human resource management to producers
- the importance of Human Resource Management should be promoted in other farm management training courses and producer events, in order to maintain and improve producer utilization.

continuation and enhancement of human resource management training efforts

As was noted under "Achievements to Date," the five-volume *Human Resource Handbook* was published during the summer of 1991, and its usefulness as a resource in a variety of instructional contexts is being assessed. To follow up on this work, the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board instructs the Secretariat to

- ensure that the *B.C. Farm Employers Handbook* is made available through as many sources as possible, including Agricultural Employment Services and Employment and Immigration Canada offices
- promote the availability and usefulness of the *Handbook* in commodity newsletters and with the assistance of staff with Agricultural Employment Services and the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, as well as through commodity leaders, the Agricultural Workforce Strategy Manager etc.
- ensure that future human resource training programs take account of the results of the various assessments being carried out
- explore other options for delivery of human resource planning and management training , recognizing that there may be a need for additional training resources (video, audiocassette, and print) and for delivery systems that take account of
  - ethnic issues and the requirements of producers whose native language is not English
  - distance learning situations
  - the requirements of illiterate and/or innumerate producers
  - the special learning requirements of younger learners or of supervisory staff.

In support of this the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board, with the assistance of the Management Committee, will act to maintain or expand existing funding for human resource management training seminars at the local level and will seek new funding for the development of new materials or training delivery systems.

Training and Education

Three of the eleven objectives targeted by the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board (see p. 11) pertain to training and education. With Objectives 4, 5, and 6, the Board has committed itself to

4. develop improved programs, with better instructional resources, and provide more opportunities for agricultural employers and employees (both present and prospective) to acquire and improve job-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes
5. increase the level of producer participation in activities designed to improve their own skill and knowledge, and the knowledge and skill of employees within their industry
6. establish knowledge and skill standards for certain types of agricultural employment

The actions proposed with respect to training and education accordingly target these objectives. In fact, they go beyond in some instances, seeking to involve not just producers, but all participants and stakeholders in the agricultural human resource development system. The actions take account of the fact that education and training can serve to address both farm management problems (see previous section) and problems associated with labour supply and the image of agricultural labour (see next section). They also imply a flexible, varied, and commodity-specific approach to finding out what training needs exist and responding to those needs.

Action Priorities

1

promotion among producers of the findings of the "Farm Management Needs Analysis Study" and the "Inventory of Required Skill Standards for Employees"

As was noted under "Achievements to Date," the University of British Columbia is completing a "Farm Management Needs Analysis Study," and the B.C. Federation of Agriculture has begun work on an "Inventory of Required Skill Standards for Employees." The Agricultural Workforce Policy Board believes that the findings of these studies should serve to focus the efforts of industry and government alike with respect to training and education. The Board also recognizes that agricultural producers will need to be aware of these findings, if they are to be involved in measures to act on them. Accordingly, the Board instructs the Secretariat to actively promote among producers the findings of these studies and of their significance for human resource planning and skills development.

2

review of existing industry/public sector partnership groups that deal with training issues to ensure the existence of responsive mechanisms for following up on the findings of the "Inventory of Required Skill Standards for Employees"

To facilitate the development or formation of more effective industry-driven and commodity-specific training advisory mechanisms, the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board calls upon the Secretariat to

- identify existing training advisory mechanisms and assess the extent to which each is able to adopt a commodity-specific focus that is responsive to the needs of producers
- highlight examples of effective industry-driven mechanisms (e.g., the Provincial Horticulture Education Advisory Committee)

For its part, the Board will involve itself in the promotional effort and will work to develop further industry-driven, commodity-specific training advisory mechanisms.

3 *development of new training materials and delivery systems as needed to address the findings of the "Inventory of Required Skill Standards for Employees"*

The Agricultural Workforce Policy Board anticipates that the "Farm Management Needs Analysis Study" and the "Inventory of Required Skill Standards for Employees" may reveal a need for new training materials and/or delivery systems for agricultural employees. The studies may, for example, show that there exists a need for "practicum-based" training system that enables learners to acquire recognizable practical skills and attain a specified standard of achievement. The Board therefore instructs the Secretariat to

- conduct an inventory and an evaluation of existing training resources and materials (e.g., distance learning materials including videos)
- determine in which of the province's agricultural industries there currently exists the greatest need for and interest in proposed new training materials or delivery systems
- establish a pilot program to test the feasibility of any proposed new training system (with a view to applying the process in other agricultural industries subsequently)
- identify agencies or individuals who can contribute to developing new materials or establishing a new delivery system
- develop any needed curriculum and training materials.

Labour Supply and the Image of Agricultural Employment

Four of the eleven objectives targeted by the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board (see p. 11) pertain to labour supply and the image of agricultural labour. With Objectives 7, 8, 9, and 10, the Board has committed itself to

7. identify and minimize imbalances in the demand for and supply of agricultural labour
8. facilitate, in a fair and orderly manner, the relocation or temporary movement of skilled and unskilled agricultural employees to industries (and regions) where there are shortages
9. improve and enhance the image of agriculture and of employment in that industry
10. take account of ethnic and cultural considerations that have a bearing on labour supply.

British Columbia's agricultural sector continues to experience a shortage of both unskilled and skilled labour to fill full-time and part time jobs--a situation that was described in the initial planning document for the "workforce initiative," *The Agricultural Workforce: A Strategy for the Future*. The actions proposed with respect to labour supply and the image of agricultural employment accordingly aim to increase the availability of agricultural labour and improve the image of the industry as a career alternative.

Action Priorities

1 *investigation of all new options for increasing the supply of agricultural labour*

Recognizing that there should be a continuation of the policy of making work opportunities in Canada available first to Canadian workers, the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board instructs the Secretariat to

- assess the feasibility of having temporary work permits issued to workers from other countries wishing to work in seasonal agricultural jobs in regions of the province where shortages of Canadian workers can be anticipated (if this is determined to be feasible, the Management Committee would be called upon to negotiate with Employment and Immigration Canada the issuance of these temporary work permits)
- investigate additional sources of financial support for students who are prepared to take up summer employment in seasonal agricultural jobs
- take steps to communicate through Agricultural Employment Services (or other agencies where appropriate) the tax exemptions that are available to students working in seasonal employment.

2 *investigation of methods available in other countries for improving worker productivity*

Changes in systems of operation ("ergonomics') and the use of human resources can improve productivity and worker satisfaction. Recognizing that such productivity-enhancing changes are constantly occurring around the world, the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board instructs the Secretariat to gather relevant information (e.g., on European advances in greenhouse nursery management) and see if it may be applicable in B.C. If translation is necessary, the Board calls upon the Management Committee to secure the necessary funding.

3 *development of informational/promotional materials about agricultural employment in B.C.*

The occupational or career decisions made by individuals entering or re-entering the job market will have an important impact on the supply of agricultural labour available to the sector. Recognizing that the sector still does not have the kind of image needed to attract prospective workers, the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board instructs the Secretariat to

- work closely with the BCFA to emphasize to producers the importance of attracting new entrants and promoting their own industry
- help industry mobilize its resources to conduct focus-group testing or other "market research" that targets prospective agricultural employees to ascertain their perception of the pros and cons of agriculture as a career
- make recommendations to industry, on the basis of the results of that research, as to the development and implementation of a promotional campaign to enhance the image of agriculture
- take steps in conjunction with industry to carry out that campaign, which might include some or all of the following elements:
  - one or more video presentations emphasizing agriculture and its importance, and describing agricultural career opportunities
  - development of a career counselling kit focusing on agriculture
  - school tours and field trips
  - a focus on agricultural success stories
  - media coverage featuring positive aspects of the agricultural life.

The Agricultural Workforce Policy Board also calls upon the Management Committee to support the efforts of the Secretariat in this regard.

4

creation of an agricultural work experience component designed to complement the "Stay in School" initiative

Recognizing that the availability of work experience opportunities can be an important incentive to some young people to continue their schooling, the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board instructs the Secretariat to

- conduct an inventory of instructional resources that would support creation of an agricultural work experience program
- develop a library of such resources
- explore the feasibility of establishing an agricultural work experience program as a locally developed program at the late Intermediate or Graduation levels in British Columbia.

Housing and Other Incentives

One of the eleven objectives targeted by the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board (see p. 11) pertains to housing and other incentives. With Objective 11, the Board has committed itself to

11. examine possible incentive measures that would make agricultural employment more attractive and facilitate the implementation of those that are feasible.

The actions proposed with respect to housing and other incentives accordingly target this objective. Although employee "incentives" is a broad term that could cover everything from receiving high wages or cash bonuses, to working in a well-managed operation or having access to professional development opportunities (e.g., on-the-job training and education), the actions proposed here are only the sort of action

- not addressed under one of the other areas
- where government has a legitimate and useful role to play in cooperation with producers (i.e., unlike furnishing of transportation or meals, or provision of attractive levels of financial remuneration, which are primarily a matter for employers to decide on, taking account of conditions in the labour market and basic employment standards).

Some actions have already been initiated, but do not seem likely to yield results that would have a significant impact on either workers or producers (e.g., an investigation into the possibility of using existing hostels to accommodate seasonal workers in agriculture). Included in the list of actions, however, are proposals that aim to eliminate existing "disincentives" that might limit the ability of agricultural producers to attract and retain good employees (e.g., there is concern about the pressure on some workers and producers to participate in "under-the-table arrangements" that circumvent certain Unemployment Insurance and Social Assistance earnings regulations).

Action Priorities

1

promotion among all producers of the importance of basic on-site facilities for workers

Well-maintained and sanitary on-site toilets must be provided to workers. Not wanting to create new forms of regulatory authority, the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board instructs the Secretariat to work with the B.C. Federation of Agriculture and with Agricultural Employment Services contractors, to make negligent producers aware (e.g., by using industry publications) of the benefits of supplying proper facilities.

2

more comprehensive determination of housing needs and expectations

As follow-up to the Housing and Labour Supply and Demand Study for the *British Columbia Tree Fruit Industry* (see "Achievements to Date"), there exists a need for more information on seasonal/permanent housing requirements for farm workers in the Fraser Valley. Eventually, a comprehensive study of workers' housing "expectations" study will be required as well. The Agricultural Workforce Policy Board accordingly calls upon the Management Committee to press for allocation of resources to undertake these studies.

3 *provision of interest-free loans to producers for construction of housing and other facilities for workers*

The availability of low-interest government loans will encourage producers and other interested parties to build and maintain bunkhouse-type accommodation and sanitation facilities. Mechanisms are needed to ensure that the funds will be used for the intended purposes. The Agricultural Workforce Policy Board consequently calls upon the Management Committee to

- identify possible sources of government funding for provision of such loans
- promote within government the idea of establishing a low-interest loan program for agricultural housing and other facilities.

In addition, the Board instructs the Secretariat to develop more detailed proposals on the mechanisms for such a program (e.g., what the terms and conditions will be and who will manage the program). The feasibility of a program paralleling the administration of student loans, whereby commercial banks administer the loan after granting, should be examined first.

4 *development and introduction of employee benefit packages and extension of their availability*

The Secretariat is currently examining benefit packages and their various components (pension plans, medical benefits, dental, etc.). The Agricultural Workforce Policy Board instructs the Secretariat to complete its assessment of the employee benefit options that would be available to agricultural producers and to distribute this information to others within the industry.

5 *exploration of establishing daycare options for workers in the agricultural sector*

Workers in agriculture, like workers in other sectors, would find access to reliable daycare an attractive benefit. The Agricultural Workforce Policy Board accordingly instructs the Secretariat to consult with government agencies such as Health and Welfare Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Women's Equality to determine the feasibility of making sector-specific modifications to daycare regulations (allowance exemptions) and guidelines to better accommodate seasonal employment. The Secretariat should also be prepared to facilitate the establishment of a test situation for such changes if their introduction seems possible.

6 *exploration of possible exemptions for agricultural employers from certain Unemployment Insurance and Social Assistance earnings regulations*

Many producers and workers feel that regulations regarding the allocation of earnings has such a negative effect on Social Assistance and Unemployment Insurance recipients that they will not participate in the agriculture workforce.

The Agricultural Workforce Policy Board accordingly suggests that government be asked to consider exempting agricultural employers from certain regulations on a trial basis. This idea is supported by the B.C. Federation of Agriculture and the Canadian Horticultural Council. Because there is no empirical evidence to suggest that such changes will address the labour supply shortages in the agricultural sector, however, the appropriate first step would be to set up a pilot project (e.g., in the Okanagan Valley, with the tree fruit industry). Benefit regulation changes would require legislative amendment but recent changes to the *Unemployment Insurance Act* and *Regulations* demonstrate that this is possible.

For More Information

If, after reading this document, you would like more information, or wish to become more involved, you can contact your commodity representative on the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board, or your local Agricultural Employment Services (AES) contractor.

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